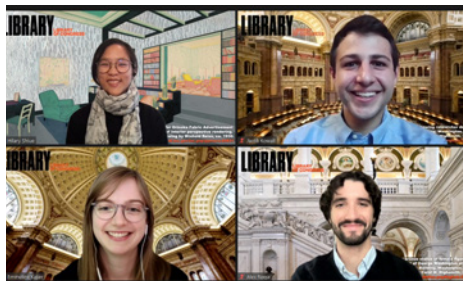


INSIDE



Digital Content Access

Four junior fellows in the Digital Collections Management and Services Division helped to advance access to the Library's digital content this summer.

PAGE 3

Transcription Milestone

Staff working remotely during the pandemic completed transcription of George S. Patton's war diaries and finished a significant chunk of Theodore Roosevelt's papers.

PAGE 4



Obituary: William Laing

William "Bill" Laing, a longtime Library of Congress staff member, passed away on May 6.

PAGE 4

Q&A: Rebekah Bain

The Manuscript Division junior fellow analyzed web metrics for two online collections of presidential papers this summer.

PAGE 5



Shawn Miller

Visitors on July 15 go up and down the stairs to the overlook above the Main Reading Room, one of the attractions of the Library's public reopening.

Reopening of Exhibitions Attracts Thousands

Visitors are coming to the Library from across the U.S. and overseas.

BY WENDI A. MALONEY

The Library's doors swung fully open this month for the first time in well over a year, drawing thousands of visitors from as far away as Brazil and Germany, filling the Jefferson Building's Great Hall, exhibits and hallways with chatter and hum that had been silenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some 2,100 visitors came during a three-day soft opening early in July. Then, on July 15-17, when the Library's major exhibitions reopened for the first time since March 2020, another 2,900 ticketed visitors poured in, and it

almost seemed like old times again.

"It surpassed all of our expectations," Katie Klenkel, chief of the Visitor Engagement Office (VEO), said of the reopening. "It was so thrilling to have people back in the building. ... Frankly, I'm over the moon with how well it went."

Visitors were pretty happy, too.

"Beautiful, impressive, breathtaking," gushed Karen Hohman of Bennington, Nebraska, strolling through Thomas Jefferson's library with her husband, Steve, and their three sons.

VISITORS, CONTINUED ON 6

DONATED TIME

The following employees have satisfied eligibility requirements to receive leave donations from other staff members. Contact Lisa Davis at ldav@loc.gov.

Lynette Brown
Tiffany Corley Harkins
Stephanie Jefferson

Linda Malone
Kenneth Mitchell

UPDATED COVID-19 GUIDANCE: MASKS REQUIRED INDOORS

Effective immediately, the Library is reinstating the requirement that all people in its buildings, including Library staff, wear masks indoors in public spaces and when around others – regardless of vaccination status. Masks must cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the face. Food service in the Madison Building will also return to take-out only.

This change is due to new guidance issued on Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of the Attending Physician of Congress. The guidance requires everyone, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask in public indoor spaces to reduce the spread of the highly contagious delta variant of COVID-19.

When the change was originally made to allow vaccinated people to unmask indoors in public spaces, the delta variant represented only 1 percent of reported infections. It now represents the majority of all COVID-19 infections.

Questions? Contact the Health Services Division at hso@loc.gov.

UPDATED PARKING POLICY

The Library has updated its policy on [temporary priorities for parking](#) to align with parking categories available during phase three, part two, of on-site operations.

Parking spaces in the Madison Garage continue to be available after 1 p.m. on weekdays and all day on Saturdays on a first-come, first-served basis for any badged Library employee if spaces are available. Employees do not need parking hang tags to park after 1 p.m. on weekdays or on Saturdays, but they must show their employee identification badges when entering the garage.

CALLING ALL IDEAS! NEW GIVING PROGRAM

This fall, the Library will launch a giving program inviting donors at all levels to become a vital part of the Library community. The Development Office wants your help naming this group of committed supporters.

Learn more and submit your ideas [here](#).

Questions? Contact Lora Sodini at lsodini@loc.gov.

STAFF SURVEY: HELP IMPROVE THE OCIO INTRANET

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is conducting a survey to gather feedback about its intranet pages and needs your input. To ensure that staff can find what they need on the site quickly and easily, the survey asks questions about how often you use the OCIO intranet, what information you'd like to see and any additional feedback you want to share.

The survey is available [here](#). It should take between five and 10 minutes to complete, and its results will be used to enhance and improve the features and content on the OCIO intranet.

Questions? Contact Emily Sprouse at esprouse@loc.gov.

GAZETTE

LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS

loc.gov/staff/gazette

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MISSION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library's central mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

ABOUT THE GAZETTE

An official publication of the Library of Congress, The Gazette encourages Library managers and staff to submit articles and photographs of general interest. Submissions will be edited to convey the most necessary information.

Back issues of The Gazette in print are available in the Communications Office, LM 143. Electronic archived issues and a color PDF file of the current issue are available online at loc.gov/staff/gazette.

GAZETTE WELCOMES LETTERS FROM STAFF

Staff members are invited to use the Gazette for lively and thoughtful debate relevant to Library issues. Letters must be signed by the author, whose place of work and telephone extension should be included so we can verify authorship. If a letter calls for management response, an explanation of a policy or actions or clarification of fact, we will ask for management response.—Ed.

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GAZETTE DEADLINES

The deadline for editorial copy for the Aug. 13 Gazette is Wednesday, Aug. 4.

Email editorial copy and letters to the editor to mhartsell@loc.gov and wmal@loc.gov.

To promote events through the Library's online calendar (www.loc.gov/loc/events) and the Gazette Calendar, email event and contact information to calendar@loc.gov by 9 a.m. Monday of the week of publication.

Boxed announcements should be submitted electronically (text files) by 9 a.m. Monday the week of publication to mhartsell@loc.gov and wmal@loc.gov.

Junior Fellows Advance Access to Digital Content

BY ANDREW CASSIDY-AMSTUTZ AND KATE MURRAY

A team of four junior fellows worked diligently over the past 10 weeks to help the Digital Collections Management and Services Division (DCMS) improve research on digital file formats and expand access to the Library's rights-restricted content. At the same time, the fellows learned about cutting-edge library work and developed skills that will serve them well as information management professionals.

Along with 38 other undergraduate and graduate students in the 2021 Junior Fellows class, Emmeline Kaser, Jacob Kowall, Alex Reese and Hilary Szu Yin Shiue concluded their fellowships today. This summer is the first time DCMS has mentored four fellows in a single year.

"They brought a fresh perspective and energy to the division that was mutually beneficial," Steve Morris, chief of DCMS, said. "Their willingness to learn new things was nicely complemented by the mentorship of our expert staff who push the envelope in developing solutions to evolving issues with digital collections."

Kowall earned a master's degree in library and information science from Simmons University earlier this year, and Shiue will complete the same degree at the University of Maryland this fall. For DCMS, they updated and expanded the Library's Sustainability of Digital Formats website, which provides information and analysis on over 500 digital file formats and offers guidance on the long-term preservation of digital content at the Library.

Among new skills the pair mastered was use of advanced digital preservation tools to identify unknown file formats. For example, while researching a collection of sample files from the Manuscript Division, Kowall and Shiue noticed several without file extensions that



Hilary Shiue (clockwise from top left), Jacob Kowall, Alex Reese and Emmeline Kaser.

could not be viewed. Older digital files didn't require file extensions, but some modern software applications do not recognize these file types, and so reject them.

By using a specialized editing program, they were able to look at the files' embedded metadata to find the unique file signature or "magic number" that declared a file to be, for example, a TIFF image. By adding the ".tif" extension to the file name, they were able to open the file in a photo viewer.

"Such investigative problem-solving skills are essential for digital preservation work in modern libraries," Trevor Owens, head of the division's Digital Content Management Section (DCM), said.

Kowall said he enjoyed learning about tools used in archival preservation of digital content. Shiue agreed, adding, "The detail-oriented process of finding out the correct extension allowed me to develop skill in providing trustworthy information utilizing multiple resources."

Kaser earned a master's degree from the University of Michigan's School of Information this year, and Reese is pursuing a master's

degree in information science from the University of Texas, Austin.

They worked with DCM to improve access to the Library's digital collections, focusing on copyrighted journal titles the Library previously received in print that are now freely available online and eligible for web archiving.

Starting with a list of titles from the Library's Duplicate Materials Exchange Program and the Directory of Open Access Journals, Kaser and Reese researched the location and availability of the journals online and determined which titles had been previously acquired by the Library. They ended up recommending 250 previously acquired titles for web archiving.

"I've learned so much seeing the concepts from my graduate coursework applied in practice," Kaser said. Added Reese, "Working with online journals has been an incredible opportunity to learn about the Library's wide range of collection materials and sources."

The fellows' work has had a direct impact on the Library's digital collections, Owens said. "It's great that we can learn together with them through their projects." ■

Staff Push Transcription Campaigns Over Finish Line

BY CARLYN OSBORN, LAUREN ALGEE
AND ABBY SHELTON

When the Library closed its doors last year to address the COVID-19 pandemic, many staff members transitioned to telework. For some, it was possible to do their normal work remotely. But for many, it was necessary to identify new kinds of remote projects.

As an already 100 percent virtual program, the By the People (BTP) crowdsourced transcription project was able to provide opportunities for colleagues who needed to shift rapidly to remote work.

Now, 15 months later, BTP is excited to announce that staff have completely transcribed the [War Diaries of George S. Patton](#), and the transcriptions are now searchable

and discoverable on loc.gov.

BTP is grateful to Patton curator Meg McAleer, a historian in the Manuscript Division, and all 57 Library staff members who worked on this first-to-be completed staff transcription campaign. A special thank you goes to library technician Ariel Segal of the Digital Conversion Team, who reviewed the majority of the collection.

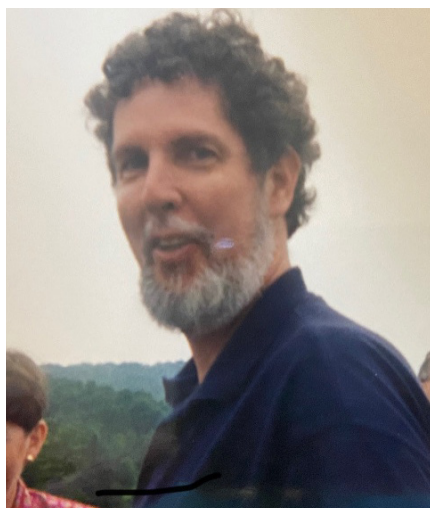
Staff transcribers have also completed more than 72,000 pages, or 62 percent, of BTP's [Theodore Roosevelt staff campaign](#). Last year, working with Roosevelt papers curator Michelle Krowl, a historian in the Manuscript Division, BTP selected a portion of his presidential papers for staff transcription. Just over 190 staff members have participated, completing an

average of 154 pages a day. When BTP combines the work of staff with the project's public Roosevelt campaign, two series of Roosevelt papers will be completed.

Only 21 pages remain on a third, smaller campaign, also organized by Krowl, to transcribe [letters of Abraham Lincoln](#). When the project finishes, it will complete transcription of Lincoln's papers.

As colleagues return to on-site work, BTP staff campaigns will conclude. So, BTP wants to take this opportunity to say that we have been proud to support staff transcription – these projects and others – and are awed by everyone's contributions. Thank you! ■

OBITUARY



Courtesy of Betty Laing

William Laing

William “Bill” Laing, a longtime Library of Congress staff member, passed away on May 6. He was 76.

Born in Charlottesville, Virginia, Laing grew up in Falls Church before attending Salem College in Salem, West Virginia. He graduated

with a bachelor's degree in social sciences and a minor in library science.

Laing began his federal career at the Library while on sabbatical from college in February 1965. He worked as a filer for the National Union Catalog for six months and then as a Library police officer for two summers. After graduation, he returned to the Library as a reference librarian in the Serial and Government Publications Division, working with the public and members of Congress, servicing the reading room and answering correspondence.

In October 1986, Laing left the Library, and he and his family moved to Tampa, Florida, for a year. When they came back to the Washington area, Laing worked at the State Department library for a year before taking a position with the Copyright Office as an acquisitions librarian in what is now the Copyright Acquisitions Division. He

retired from the Copyright Office with 30 years of federal service in 1999.

During his Library career, Laing was known not only for his professionalism, but also for his contributions as a steward for Local 2910 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

In retirement, Laing and his wife, Betty, bought a home in Martinsburg, West Virginia, and he worked part-time as a reference librarian at Shepherd College in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Laing was also a substitute teacher in the Berkeley County Schools for 15 years.

In addition to Betty, Laing is survived by a son, James; two daughters, Sandra and Deborah; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. ■

QUESTION & ANSWER



Rebekah Bain

Rebekah Bain

Rebekah Bain, a junior fellow in the Manuscript Division, earned masters' degrees this spring from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, in history and library and information science with a concentration in archives.

Tell us a little about your project.

My teammate, Maggie Jenson, and I are working collaboratively on two projects for our fellowship this summer. The main project is a comparative web metrics analysis of two presidential papers collections that are available online: those of Thomas Jefferson and Ulysses S. Grant.

We chose these collections to compare because they are similar in size, but they were launched online 18 years apart. The Jefferson papers were made available by 1999 – they were one of the first digital presentations of presidential papers – while the Grant papers were added in 2017. This different timeframe provides a point of contrast.

During our period of study, the Jefferson papers received significantly more traffic than the Grant papers, and we are seeking to

determine if Jefferson's presence online for a longer time is affecting collection use. Another difference is that the Jefferson papers are described individually online, making keyword searches more effective, while the Grant papers are described at a broader level. The featured content material is popular in the Grant collection, which is useful guidance for collections described at that level.

With our analysis, we hope to better understand the collections' web traffic patterns and how viewership is affected by publicity initiatives and these collection features.

Our secondary project is to create a LibGuide on presidents' correspondence with their families, especially letters they wrote to their children. The guide will help patrons locate and research the family lives of the presidents whose papers are in the Library's collections. We hope our insights from the web metrics analysis on viewership patterns will contribute to our decisions as we build the LibGuide. For example, by understanding what primary sources are popular in the digital collections, we can work to make these materials easily accessible.

Describe a typical day.

I meet regularly with my teammate to discuss our collaborative work, and we are in frequent communication with our project mentors, Lara Szypszak and Loretta Deaver. On most days, I also attend a program from the professional development series offered by the Internship and Fellowship Program Section or meet with staff from different Library divisions to learn about the paths that brought them to the Library. Occasionally, I answer reference questions from patrons who are researching presidential papers, helping them to navigate the digital collections.

What have you discovered of special interest?

For our web metrics analysis, I have been reading through many of the letters Grant sent to his wife, Julia. They provide a glimpse

into the thoughts and feelings of a man primarily remembered for his role in the Civil War. During his time in the military, he missed his family and often sent flowers to Julia pressed inside the letters. The outlines of these flowers can sometimes be seen on the paper.

What attracted you to the Junior Fellows program?

I was drawn to the idea of working with historical documents at a national level. Few other institutions hold archival material of the same national significance as the Library's, and that immediately attracted me to the junior fellowship in the Manuscript Division. The pandemic has challenged cultural institutions to explore new ways of providing access to their resources, and I wanted to learn and be a part of remote access initiatives at the Library.

What has your experience been like overall?

This experience has been incredible, and I am very grateful to be a part of the Library this summer. While it is disappointing not to see the Library and the documents in the Manuscript Division in person, the remote work environment has not diminished my learning opportunities. In fact, working remotely has allowed me to better understand and empathize with the experiences of researchers unable to go to the Library themselves and pushed me to work harder to provide guidance and resources for patrons.

Is the fellowship influencing your career plans?

My graduate degrees were coordinated to lead to a position working with archives or special collections, which I will be pursuing after finishing my fellowship. My dream is to preserve history and provide public access to historical material, whether that be at a small local institution or at a national level. This goal has been reinforced by my fellowship at the Library and the opportunity to work with manuscript collections that are of paramount interest to our national heritage. ■

VISITORS, CONTINUED FROM 1

“What’s not to enjoy?” asked Claudia Condit, a local tour guide, as she shepherded a small group from Brazil through the Great Hall. “This is a little piece of jewelry here in D.C.”

Since the soft reopening, visitors have been able to view the Gutenberg Bible and the Abel Buell 1784 U.S. map and observe the Main Reading Room from above. Newly unshuttered on July 15 were the exhibitions “Rosa Parks: In Her Own Words”; “Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote”; “Thomas Jefferson’s Library”; and “Exploring the Early Americas.”

If visitors have any questions about any of this, they can interact with a “virtual docent” on a large screen in the Great Hall – an innovation VEO introduced to enable Library docents to educate visitors remotely.

“It couldn’t have happened without the incredible professionals who work here at the Library,” Klenkel said of the reopening. Staff from throughout the Center for Learning, Literacy and Engagement are supporting it, she said, along with the U.S. Capitol Police and the contract security team that works in exhibit spaces.

On exhibits opening day, some 65 percent of visitors came from beyond the local area – from states across the country and overseas. More than half the crowd was visiting the Library for the first time, according to a post-visit survey.

Rev. Charles Mayberry, pastor of First Baptist Church in Waycross, Georgia, came with his wife, Amy, and daughters Agnes and Greta. The Gutenberg Bible was first on his list to see, but he said his family was fascinated by everything on offer – “the architecture, the history, all that’s here.”

Agnes and Greta were especially moved by “Shall Not Be Denied,” which showcases the long battle for women’s suffrage. The timing of the exhibition, coinciding with the election of Vice President Kamala

Harris, “is amazing,” Agnes said.

A video featuring women political leaders in “Denied” was a particular draw. In the Parks exhibit, one family lingered over an image of her childhood home, while others immersed themselves in the quotations on the walls. Plenty took pictures of books in Jefferson’s library.

Gary Edwards and his wife, Ann, a retired schoolteacher, were on a road trip with two of their granddaughters. Ann reserved passes before they left their home in Spokane, Washington, to be sure they wouldn’t miss out. “This is part of their education,” Gary said of the couple’s grandkids. “They love it.”

The Edwardses had visited before with an older granddaughter. But for VEO volunteer services specialist Kimberly Dungey, July 15 was a first. She began working at the Library during the pandemic on telework and had yet to engage

in-person with visitors to Library exhibitions.

Stationed behind a lectern in the Great Hall, Dungey directed visitors to what they wanted to see and monitored the nearby screen on which virtual docents appeared – her job involves preparing docents to take on that role.

“Getting to the point where we can invite visitors has been an undertaking but well worth it,” she said. “Seeing people’s excitement at being in this space is really rewarding.”

“Who was Gutenberg?” “Are the busts of Washington and Jefferson in the Great Hall real?” “Where are the books?”

Deborah Dakin, the inaugural virtual docent, fielded dozens of questions like that on July 15. A docent since 2012, she missed sharing the Library and its treasures with the public. Over the

BELARUSAN LEADER VISITS LIBRARY



Belarus opposition leader Svetlana Tikhonovskaya (center) came to the Library last week while on a working visit to Washington, D.C. The U.S. ambassador to Belarus, Julie Fisher (left), accompanied her with State Department officials. Here, the pair speak with Matthew Young, the European Division’s specialist on Russia and Belarus, about collections items on display.

María Peña

course of an hour, she talked with 10 groups averaging four people each. By the end of the weekend, a total of 275 visitors had spoken with virtual volunteers.

“It was great getting the chance to interact with visitors after so many months away from the Library. ... I look forward to doing it again.”

Dungey said virtual docents have to log into one Zoom meeting before their sessions for a briefing and afterward for a debriefing. They log into a second Zoom link to go live in the Great Hall on a monitor equipped with a webcam and two microphones, so visitors can approach and ask questions.

The docents must have had extensive in-person training before the pandemic to be eligible to serve virtually. To prepare, they have to attend a 90-minute training session.

Al Weisner, another longtime Library docent, had earlier volunteered virtually for the Smithsonian National Museum of American History and jumped at the chance to apply his online interaction skills at the Library.

“To be honest, I really miss the volunteering at the Library, and this is a great opportunity to re-engage,” he said. It is also, he joked, “an excellent re-entry vehicle to normalcy.”

Of course, the pandemic isn’t over, and it isn’t exactly like old times yet.

For health and safety reasons, visitors are encouraged to reserve free timed-entry passes in advance of arriving. They’re available on the Library’s website on a rolling, 30-day basis, and each visitor can reserve up to six. Opening days each week are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the last entry at 3 p.m.

The number of passes available is limited to 25 percent of the Jefferson Building’s capacity, and everyone inside – visitors and staff alike – must wear masks. Walk-in passes are available based on the number of reserved passes that

RIO OFFICE CELEBRATES 50TH



André Cypriano/Prints and Photographs Division

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Library’s Rio de Janeiro field office, the Library has released a [collection of photographs](#) online by the noted Brazilian photographer André Cypriano. In this 2008 picture taken in Rio de Janeiro, Mestre Camisa, a master of the martial art capoeira, plays a berimbau, a musical instrument that often accompanies capoeira.

end up not being redeemed.

“The setup works,” Steve Hohman commented as he viewed Jefferson’s library with his family.

Cheerful compliance with the Library’s masking requirement was high, with “very, very few exceptions,” Klenkel reported. VEO supplies masks for those who arrive without them, or they can choose to buy masks in the Library Shop.

Since the soft reopening, the shop has had a brisk business. Besides masks, many visitors are buying mementos – T-shirts and “On These Walls: Inscriptions and Quotations in the Buildings of the Library of Congress” by John Cole are especially popular.

Last week, between July 22 and 24, a further 2,500 people came to the Library, and passes for upcoming weeks are almost all reserved. Going forward, Klenkel said VEO will release more advance passes online to account for the fact that some are unredeemed.

Otherwise, she anticipates that the current reopening model will continue, depending on COVID-related conditions, until the Library moves into phase three, part three, of its phased restorations of operations plan.

If it’s not like old times yet, it’ll do for now. ■

**Your Employee Personal Page (EPP) is at
www.nfc.usda.gov/epps/**